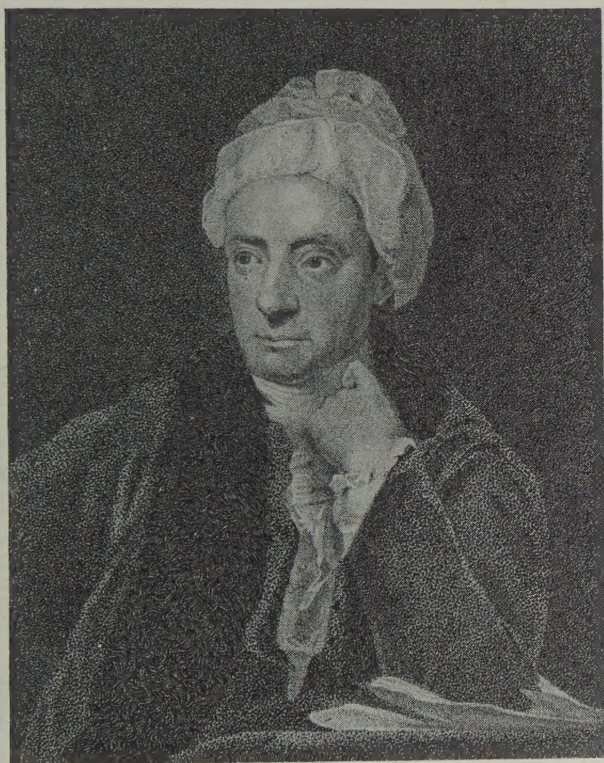


# The Hymn

OCTOBER 1950



WILLIAM COWPER

Volume 1

Number 4

# Winning Psalm Tune

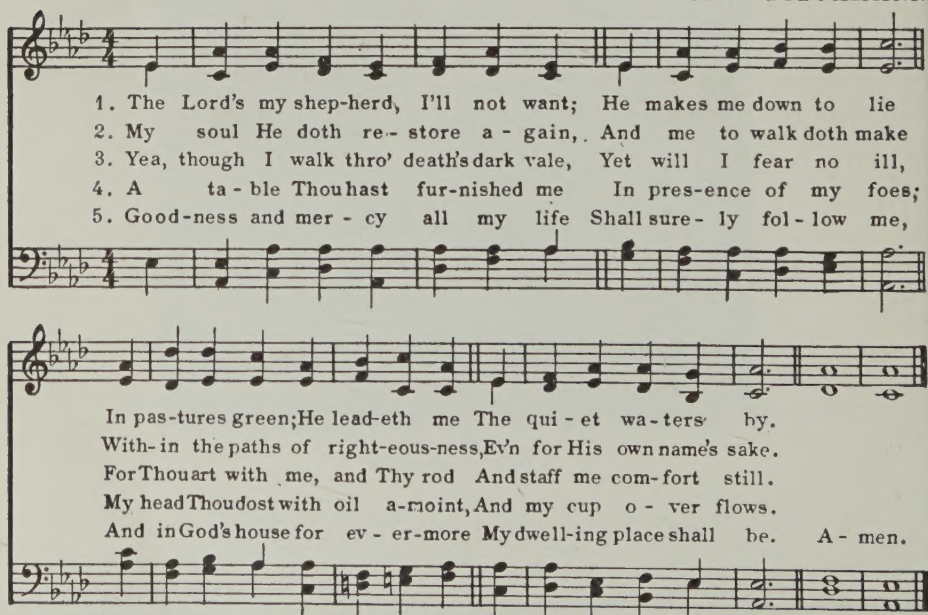
THROUGH the courtesy of Professor Thomas H. Hamilton, Monmouth College, Monmouth, Illinois, we print the winning psalm tune from the Seventh Annual Psalm Tune Competition, conducted at Monmouth College under the bequest of Mrs. J. B. Herbert. The competition was of especial interest this year, since the words for which a tune was written are the beloved lines of the 1650 Scottish Psalter version of the 23rd Psalm.

"The primary purpose of the competition is to re-assert the value of the Psalms as an inspiration to worship." It is fitting that Mrs. Herbert endowed the competition in memory of Dr. Herbert, one time Director of Music at Monmouth. There will be three more contests, the final one being held in 1953, at which time the ten winning tunes will be published as a feature of the college centennial. For many years the United Presbyterian Church, with which Monmouth is affiliated, permitted only the psalms to be used in worship; in 1925 the use of hymns was permitted, through an act of the Church's General Assembly.

1

## Psalm 23

C. W. DIECKMANN



1. The Lord's my shep-herd, I'll not want; He makes me down to lie  
 2. My soul He doth re-store a-gain, And me to walk doth make  
 3. Yea, though I walk thro' death's dark vale, Yet will I fear no ill,  
 4. A ta-ble Thou hast fur-nished me In pres-ence of my foes;  
 5. Good-ness and mer-cy all my life Shall sure-ly fol-low me,

In pas-tures green; He lead-eth me The qui-et wa-ters by.  
 With-in the paths of right-eous-ness, Ev'n for His own name's sake.  
 For Thou art with me, and Thy rod And staff me com-fort still.  
 My head Thou dost with oil a-moint, And my cup o-ver flows.  
 And in God's house for ev-er-more My dwell-ing place shall be. A-men.

This setting won first place in the 1950 Herbert Memorial Psalm Tune Competition  
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# The Hymn

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## Editor's Column

Throughout 1950 one of The Hymn Society's primary objectives is the celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the Scottish Psalter. To date, over 25,000 pieces of promotional literature have been distributed to churches throughout the country.

Nothing could be more in keeping than to celebrate Reformation Sunday, October 29, by devoting the morning or evening services to singing the Scottish psalms and the retelling of their history and that of the Scottish Reformation. *Every member of the Society* should encourage the clergy and musical ministry in his own church (and in others) to avail themselves of this great opportunity.

The influence of the Scottish psalms and their tunes has been felt wherever the Reformed Church has spread; modern hymnals of all denominations increasingly make use of the sturdy psalter tunes, and in some cases the psalms themselves. The celebration of the Tercentenary of the Psalter has not been limited to Presbyterian churches alone. Seven hundred singers from metropolitan churches were a part of the congregation assembled in New York's Riverside Church to hear Scottish-born Dr. Robert J. McCracken, a Baptist, tell of his affection for the metrical psalms. The Editor will not soon forget a Festival in the small Methodist church at Farmingdale, N. J., where choirs from surrounding churches met together to sing the psalms. The Festival was a striking example of what can be done by an alert choir director.

Sample copies of Festival bulletins from that and other services are available from the Society office.

Mr. Ralph H. Brigham, one of our Contributing Editors, writes that he incorporates a psalm tune in each weekly preservice organ recital at the Second Congregational Church in Rockford, Illinois. A clergyman tells of his successful experience making use of the metrical psalms for unison congregational reading.

Organists, ministers, music committee members—anyone concerned with church music—ought to read the excellent article by Prof. Allan Bacon which appears in the Spring issue of *Religion and Life*. Head of the Organ department at the Conservatory in the College of the Pacific, Stockton, Cal., he has made an enviable reputation as an organist and teacher. Read his article, and ask yourself some searching questions. (See page 25.)

Everyone who attended the Society's Annual Meeting was thrilled to hear the first-hand report of our new Chapter. Deserved credit for much of the impetus behind it was given to Dr. Reginald L. McAll, our Executive Secretary. During a visit to the Southwestern Baptist Seminary at Fort Worth, Texas, he spoke several times on hymns and church music. Dr. McAll is available for similar appearances throughout the country, and we commend his intrepid ability to stimulate interest in hymns and to interpret the work of the Society.



# William Cowper As a Hymn-Writer

GEORGE LITCH KNIGHT

WILLIAM COWPER's tortured life ended 150 years ago, April 25, 1800, and "the dark cloud of melancholy which had hung menacingly about him so long, lifted—for ever." Hymn-lovers pay tribute to him as one of the authors of the *Olney Hymns*; it had been John Newton's suggestion that the two should compose a volume of hymns "for the promotion of the faith and comfort of sincere Christians," and also "to perpetuate the remembrance of an intimate and endeared friendship." The writing of these hymns was the only really intellectual occupation in which Cowper engaged for nearly seven years. A fitting tribute to Cowper comes from Mrs. Browning's poem "Cowper's Grave":

O poets, from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless singing!  
O Christians, at your cross of hope a hopeless hand was clinging!  
O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths beguiling,  
Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while ye were smiling.

That the ter-jubilee of William Cowper's death should occur in the Centenary year of the death of William Wordsworth is of interest, for in some respects it was the poetry of Cowper which was a fore-taste of what poetry-lovers were to find in Wordsworth. The following might well have been said of Wordsworth: "Cowper," said Sir James Mackintosh, "does not describe the most beautiful scenes in nature; he discovers what is most beautiful in ordinary scenes." Dr. Stopford Brooke said of Cowper's poetry that "He struck the first note of the revolutionary poetry, and he struck it in connexion with God." Of his place in the listing of great English poets, Goldwyn Smith says:

"Cowper is the most important English poet of the period between Pope and the illustrious group headed by Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley, which arose out of the intellectual ferment of the European Revolution. . . He was also the great poet of the religious revival which was called Evangelicism within the Establishment and Methodism without."

It is not surprising that Cowper has been the subject of three major biographical studies and a number of doctoral theses during the past fifty years. He is remembered for his friendships—Lady Austen, William Hayley, the Newtons, the Unwins—and one of the great tributes paid Cowper came from a friend and companion of his London days, Lord Thurlow, who said: "If there is a good man on earth, it is William Cowper." Cowper's poetry reflected his interest in Nature—he immortalized three hares—it reflected a humorous bent in "John Gil-

pin"; and it expressed his patriotism in a great epic, "The Task." As a letter-writer Cowper is considered to be one of the finest in the language.

However, it is Cowper the hymn-writer in whom we are most interested. A survey of the better-known English and American hymnals of the past fifty years indicates that almost without exception Cowper is represented by either "God moves in a mysterious way" or "Oh! for a closer walk with God," and that in the majority of recent hymnals Cowper is represented by at least four, and not always the same four. On this basis alone, it may be concluded that his position as a hymn-writer is at present secure. Canon George W. Briggs, writing a book review in the April, 1949, *Bulletin* of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, states:

"What future . . . any hymns may have, time alone can tell. For there is a fashion in hymns, as in everything else, and the choice of one generation is cheerfully discarded by the next. If the verdict of time is not an infallible test, it is perhaps the surest . . ."

Granted the wisdom of Canon Briggs' observation, a few of Cowper's hymns have indeed stood the test of time, since some of them are over 200 years old and still in *common use*.

Critical opinions of Cowper's poetry and hymns vary with the passage of time. In an early 19th century memoir of the poet, *The Homes and Haunts of Cowper*, appears rather extravagant praise:

"... the general tendency of his writings is, undoubtedly, to excite and give permanence to the feelings which promote reflection, and incline the thoughts to another and better state; yet, though chiefly emanating from this principle, they exhibit a variety seldom the produce of a single mind . . ."

In the 1914 edition of *The Cambridge History of English Literature* Harold Child wrote:

"Cowper was to become the poet of a religious sect, which, though doubtless narrow and unattractive in itself, had its share in breaking up the spiritual ice of the age . . . his sympathies were not wide; but they were on the side of kindness . . ."

About the *Olney Hymns* Prof. Child said:

"Cowper's contributions to the volume were initialed 'C' and among them occur several hymns still in use, together with three or four which are the best-known of English hymns, to whatever extent people may differ as to their mortality . . ."

He then lists "Oh! for a closer walk with God," "Hark, my soul it is the Lord," "Jesus, where'er thy people meet," "There is a fountain filled



with blood," and "God moves in a mysterious way." Of them all he says:

"The salient quality of them all is their sincerity and directness. The poet's actual experiences in the spiritual life are expressed with the simplicity generally characteristic of his work . . . his hymns are a stay and comfort to souls experiencing what might be called the practical difficulties of certain phases of the spiritual life . . . most of them are hopeful in tone; for, though the book was not published till 1779, the hymns were written by Cowper before 1773."

There have been adverse critical judgments of Cowper's hymns, and one of them comes from Lord David Cecil, Cowper's most sensitive biographer, who wrote in the introductory essay to *The Oxford Book of English Verse* (1940):

"The average hymn is a by-word for forced feeble sentiment, flat conventional expression. And those poets who have invoked both the sacred and the profane muse have, with some striking exceptions, found themselves more comfortable with the profane . . . Cowper is remembered for 'John Gilpin' rather than for the *Olney Hymns*."

A further evidence of contemporary judgment of Cowper as a hymn-writer is reflected in the words of no less an authority than Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, who, in a recent sermon on the Scottish Psalter,\* referred to: "such introspective moaning as Cowper indulges in . . ." Dr. Coffin then quoted some lines from "Oh! for a closer walk with God" to prove the point. The subjective quality of Cowper's hymns is obvious when they are compared with 17th century objective Scottish metrical psalms, but that is scarcely a sufficient reason to damn them.

Apparently, contemporary critical judgments of Cowper's hymns express a rather dim view of their quality and mortality. Let us, therefore, see how Cowper fares in some representative hymnals published in the present century. When Robert Bridges compiled his famed *Yattendon Hymnal* at the turn of the century, the then Poet Laureate avowedly edited a collection free from anything unworthy in words or music. His canons of judgment were severe, and he selected only 100 hymns. Among them he included Cowper's "Oh! for a closer walk with God." The most recent hymnal to come from England, the 1950 Revision of conservative *Hymns Ancient & Modern*, we discover, contains five of Cowper's hymns, two set to psalter tunes, one to an 18th century tune, one to a tune from Michael Haydn, and one to Dykes' *St. Bees*.

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\* "The Enduring Significance of the Scottish Psalter," preached at the Tercentenary Commemoration of the Psalter in Fort George Presbyterian Church, New York City, January 29, 1950.

When the hymns for the American Episcopal *Hymnal* 1940 were selected, the editors were rigorous to a fault when it came to excluding unworthy hymns; many old favorites were rejected. However, we note with interest that there are four of Cowper's hymns included, two of the four having been in every Episcopal hymnal published in America since 1826—"Oh! for a closer walk with God" and "God moves in a mysterious way." The other two are "Hark, my soul, it is the Lord," and "Sometimes a light surprises," the latter having come into the 1940 book without previous use in earlier editions.

The Presbyterian Hymnal of 1933 includes five of Cowper's hymns, the four "standard ones" and "There is a fountain filled with blood." The present Methodist book contains seven of Cowper's hymns, three of which do not appear in most other American books, though they were in the 1922 edition of *Hymns Ancient & Modern*. Having mentioned stolid *H. A. & M.*, we ought to examine *Songs of Praise*, probably the most unusual hymnal published in England during the present century. Of the recent hymnals, this one sought with a vengeance to eliminate anything "morbid or sentimental" (or introspective!) and, yet, there are in that book five of Cowper's hymns. The editors were kind to Cowper, for they set his words to some of the finest tunes in the book.

Scotland—where metrical psalms were enthroned for so many generations—gave the world a great hymnal, *The Church Hymnary*; in it are to be found hymns of high merit. Cowper is represented in this collection by seven hymns. In view of the evidence cited, it seems safe to conclude that in contemporary hymnals, representing every shade of theology and denominational emphasis, Cowper seems to find a place.

Cowper could never be called a "popular" hymn-writer. Many hymns, written as they were during the high tide of the Evangelical era, are couched in biblical terms which had meaning to his contemporaries. Such scriptural allusions, unfortunately, though commonplace to 18th century congregations, are not always understood by moderns.

In his Fernley Lecture, "The Hymn Book of the Modern Church," Dr. Arthur E. Gregory said:

"Cowper is the one great hymn writer who ranks with the greater poets . . . Had Cowper never written a hymn, he would have had fame sufficient as a poet; had he never written a 'poem', he would still have lived through the ages as the writer of immortal hymns."

Cowper does represent a rare combination in English literature—successful both as poet and as hymn-writer. In her lively article on "*The Olney*



*Hymns*," appearing in the April, 1949, *Bulletin* of The Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Mollie Caird comments:

"The nineteenth century had several great poets, but no poet good enough to be a great hymn-writer. For the hymn, above all literary forms, requires style as well as soul; no doubt the most important requirements of a hymn-writer are great faith and a burning zeal to express it, but because hymns are necessarily couched in simple metres, and are designed to be sung in chorus, even the greatest faith and zeal can be reduced to doggerel unless the work is in the hands of someone who has had real training and practice in the art of writing well-turned verse. Such a one was Cowper . . . when the call came to him to write hymns his faith did not grope blindly for words and muddle itself on to paper in a meaningless spate of sound, as the faith of some has done, but at once found the right metre, the proper epithet, the happy phrase . . ."

Mrs. Caird also reminds us that the Evangelical period was a revolt against the rationalistic religion of the previous generation; this is seen in the subjective quality of the Evangelical hymns. Perhaps the best example of this is to compare a product of the rationalistic period—"The spacious firmament on high"—with one of the later period, "Rock of Ages, cleft for *me*." Cowper, writing in the Evangelical period, was not out of character in the subjective quality of his hymns. In the prologue to *The Stricken Deer*, Cecil's perceptive biography of Cowper, is the following statement:

"He felt more intensely and expressed himself with greater brilliance than the people around him; but what he felt was what they felt, and his superior sensitiveness and brilliance only helped him to express it more exactly."

Perhaps this is the reason why Christians of the 20th century can find consolation and help when they sing "Oh! for a closer walk with God."

Before we leave the consideration of Cowper's poetic attributes, we must bear in mind that his hymns may be studied in another way. Since they come from a certain period in poetry, it is natural that they should reflect the literary conceits of the period. With this thought in mind, Professor Lodwick Hartley, in his great study, "The Worm and the Thorn: A Study of Cowper's Hymns," (published in *The Journal of Religion*, July, 1949) points out that there are three images which assume particular importance throughout the hymns: the worm, the thorn, and the tempest. Each image is a commonplace of 18th century Evangelical piety and hymns, and like other commonplaces the poet employs, they constitute a limitation to his poetic range. Prof. Hartley points out that:

"... to each of these figures Cowper has given a particular significance. The humility, symbolized by the worm; the suffering, by the thorn; and the inner conflict, by the tempest, are not mere universals in the Evangelical religious experience. They become intensely personal elements of a religious approach."

Prof. Hartley's study is also of unusual interest in that he treats the hymns in the order of their printing in the *Olney Hymns* (admittedly doing some violence to their chronology) and in which they are re-printed in standard editions, as if they were a single work (in the general manner of a work like Tennyson's *In Memoriam*) in which is recorded an intensely personal struggle for a faith. The result of this method is that "there is an increased perception of the essential unity of the poems and an enhanced appreciation of their literary effectiveness as a spiritual record."

It is important, as we look at some of the individual hymns, to remember that Newton advised Cowper to "write hymns for plain people." In *The Evolution of the English Hymn* Gillman writes:

"It is delightful to remember that the Olney hymns, which have gone all over the world and carried with them a message of calm trust to countless waiting souls, were written for a little village congregation."

Perhaps this is one reason why some of them have endured into their second century of use. Admittedly, Cowper did not introduce any revolutionary literary forms in his hymns; Julian said of them that Cowper "has contributed little to the development of their structure, adopting traditional modes of the time."

In *The Hymnal 1940 Companion* we read:

"Cowper's hymns are distinguished by their plaintiveness, tenderness, and refinement—and that in spite of the fact that they are largely transcripts of his own immediate feelings."

"Oh! for a closer walk with God" was one of the hymns which came out of a personal experience; it was written during a serious illness of his friend Mrs. Unwin. In a letter written the following day, Cowper said:

"... I began to compose the verses yesterday morning before daybreak but fell asleep at the end of the first two lines: when I awaked again, the third and fourth were whispered to my heart in a way which I have often experienced."

People either do or do not like this hymn; those who can sing it sincerely, as an expression of their own inner conflicts, will always love it.



John Newton wrote "Dear Shepherd of Thy People, hear" for the opening of 'The great room in The Great House' at Olney, where local prayer meetings were held; Newton's hymn is no longer in common use, but the one which Cowper wrote for the same occasion is well known as "Jesus, where'er Thy people meet." The third stanza of the original, with its reference to "thy chosen few," is usually omitted. The simplicity of Cowper's lines is nowhere more evident than in the stanza:

"And thou, within no walls confined,  
Inhabitest the humble mind;  
Such ever bring thee, where they come,  
And going, take thee to their home."

Cowper's periods of mental stress were of varying length and duration. During a period of "serenity of soul" Cowper wrote "Hark, my soul, it is the Lord." Of all the *Olney Hymns* it is generally agreed to be one of the best poetically and as a hymn. In it the writer grapples with the meaning of *John xxi. 16* "Lovest thou me?" His reference to a mother's love is touching, for we know the deep love he bore for his mother whom he lost while a young child. But even that love must give way to the demands of discipleship. Much of the hymn's effectiveness as a dialogue between the Saviour and the sinner is lost in the modern hymnals which so often omit the necessary quotation marks. The final stanza is one of Cowper's best.

Palgrave, in *The Treasury of Sacred Song*, refers to "Sometimes a light surprises," as "this brilliant lyric." Cowper entitled it "Joy and Peace in Believing," and it reflects the faith which was his in his saner periods. It has some exquisite lines. The following are representative of its quality:

"Though vine nor fig-tree neither,  
Their wonted fruit should bear,  
Tho' all the fields should wither,  
Nor flocks, nor herds, be there;  
Yet God the same abiding,  
His praise shall tune my voice;  
For while in him confiding,  
I cannot but rejoice."

In some churches today there is a revival of interest in services of Divine Healing. For such a service no hymn would be more appropriate than the one which commences, "Heal us, Emmanuel," and which concludes with these lines:

## THE HYMN

"She too, who touch'd thee in the press,  
 And healing virtue stole,  
 Was answer'd, 'Daughter, go in peace,  
 Thy faith hath made thee whole.'

Concealed amid the gath'ring throng,  
 She would have shunn'd thy view;  
 And if her faith was firm and strong,  
 Had strong misgivings too.

Like her with hopes and fears we come,  
 To touch thee if we may;  
 Oh! send us not despairing home,  
 Send none unheal'd away."

Cowper based one of the hymns on *Proverbs viii. 22-31*, and two of its lines are an excellent summation of the attributes of God:

"In wisdom thou hast made us,  
 And died for us in love."

*The Oxford Book of Christian Verse* includes a hymn which is too personal for congregational use, but which has value as a devotional reading. It reflects the preoccupation which Cowper had with the state of his own soul, and the closing stanza might be echoed by many another:

"Oh make this heart rejoice, or ache;  
 Decide this doubt for me;  
 And if it be not broken, break,  
 And heal it, if it be."

Cowper's hymn on prayer has some sensible advice:

"Have you no words! Ah, think again,  
 Words flow apace when you complain;  
 And fill your fellow-creature's ear  
 With the sad tale of all your care.  
 Were half the breath thus vainly spent,  
 To heav'n in supplications sent;  
 Your cheerful song would oft'ner be,  
 'Hear what the Lord has done for me.'"

Our grandfathers loved Hymn xxx in the *Olney Hymns* which was entitled "The Light and Glory of The Word." It is to our loss that we no longer sing "The Spirit breathes upon the Word."

(Continued on page 20)



# Tune Indexing

LEONARD ELLINWOOD

**C**HURCH MUSICIANS and interested scholars have traditionally been disturbed by the confusion which arises because there are hymn tunes with similar names, because some tunes have been abbreviated or extended to make entirely new tunes, and because many tunes are associated with more than one text.

It is interesting to trace some of the reasons for the existing situation. The practices of metrical psalmody kept the majority of settings in Common Metre; this was necessitated by the fact that few tunes would be needed in those village parishes which boasted but few musicians or a barrel-organ. These conditions made it necessary that the few tunes used would have distinctive names so that they could be readily assigned, and would be instantly recognized by the congregation. Thus Robert Burns could write in his *Cotter's Saturday Night*:

They chant their artless notes in simple guise,  
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;  
Perhaps *Dundee's* wild-warbling measures rise,  
Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name;  
Or noble *Elgin* beets the heaven-ward flame,  
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:

and the majority of his readers recognized the old familiar friends. Indeed, Scottish psalmody during most of the 17th and 18th centuries used about a dozen (and frequently fewer) "common tunes."

Names, usually honoring various cities, were first given to Psalm tunes in Thomas Este's *Whole Book of Psalmes*, 1592. Confusion soon set in, for the Scottish tune, *Dundee*, was called *Windsor* in the English Psalters alongside an entirely different *Dundee*. *Winchester New* had to be distinguished from an older *Winchester*. By the mid-eighteenth century, tune names had to be qualified by the metre or the composer in order to distinguish between the many tunes bearing the name *All Saints*, and the *St. Thomas'*, etc. In Germany, Lutheran hymnody tended to borrow tunes for several texts less frequently, but even there the use of "Herzlich thut mich verlangen" as well as "O Haupt voll Blut" with the *Passion Chorale* has been a source of confusion.

Sometimes a tune such as *Winchester New* was later extended or otherwise altered to become a new tune, in this case *Crasselius*. Or, an aria, like Handel's "Non vi pacque ingiusti Dei" from Act II of *Siroe*, was shaped into two such diverse tunes as *Christmas* and *Innocents*.

As long as Ravenscroft's and Playford's Psalters remained the standard in England and in the colonies, little confusion arose; but by the end of the 18th century the rise of singing schools and improved music printing led many teachers to issue several series of tune-books, and soon there was no distinction between tunes on the basis of names alone. Today, a century and a half later, names alone are well-nigh useless for identification purposes, and yet the need for a means of identification is greater than ever before. Not only do musicians want indexes to aid in the search for a given tune, but organists more and more want choral preludes based on their hymn-tunes, and they must scan catalogs and publishers' lists to try to identify the correct work—still through names alone.

There have been several attempts to build comprehensive indexes of hymn-tune names. In each instance, the compilers have been led astray through duplicate names, either similar names for different tunes or different names for the same tune. Clearly, something more fundamental must be undertaken before our musical and liturgical scholars are adequately served. Apart from failure to recognize clearly the inadequacy of names alone, a principal deterrent in the solution of the problem has, reasonably enough, been an economic factor. Publication costs for reference books have always been prohibitive, even where ordinary type-script was involved; any consideration of reproducing the tunes themselves, through musical illustration, at once raises costs beyond either private means or normal commercial channels. And yet something of the sort is basic to music indexing.

During the past half-century there have been a number of indexes published to the works of individual composers. Most of these have been along the lines of the now standard type of thematic index, where works are listed chronologically by type with the opening phrase of each movement given in musical notation. When vocal music is involved, an additional index of the first-lines of the texts gives a handy key to the location of the themes for those works; otherwise the user must thumb through the entire index to find his theme. In the case of the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, several thematic indexes of this sort have been published. There have also been two other types published which are of particular interest to our subject.

In 1938 May De Forest Payne published a *Melodic Index to the Works of Johann Sebastian Bach* with the standard reproduction of themes, and with an intriguing "skeleton finding list" based on the first three progressions of the themes. Ignoring repeated notes, and all questions of tonality and pitch, she shows by means of four dots whether the second, third, and fourth pitches are higher or lower



than the preceding pitch; reference is made from each "skeleton" to the pertinent themes by numbers. This ingenious device works very efficiently and simply, but at no saving of expense to the publisher for her "skeletons" require specially engraved plates similar to the musical examples themselves.

Even more pertinent to our subject is the technique employed in 1941 by Henry S. Drinker for his *Bach Chorale Texts . . . and a Musical Index to the Melodies*. This index is limited to the 389 chorale or hymn tunes harmonized by Bach in the edition of Bernhard Fr. Richter; although musical examples are used, they are not needed for the application of the classification employed. Drinker transposes all of his examples into either C major or A minor, and then classifies them according to whether

- (1) they begin on the weak or strong beat,
- (2) the first progression is up or down,
- (3) they are in a major or minor key,
- (4) they begin on Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, etc.,
- (5) the number of times the first note is repeated, or whether the first progression is by a second, a third, a fourth, or a fifth,
- (6) the melody is in 4/4 or in 3/4 time.

Such an approach is realistic, and has proven very effective in practice, although it goes into more details than are necessary for such a limited number of examples.

For *The Hymnal 1940 Companion* (New York: Church Pension Fund, 1949) the present writer made a somewhat similar classification of the tunes in *The Hymnal 1940*. He avoided Drinker's transpositions for the simple reason that too few parish organists or clergy can transpose.<sup>1</sup> He also ignored the repeated notes and time signatures because both of these details frequently vary between different adaptations or uses of the same tune. Instead, he found that for the 608 tunes involved it was sufficient to classify them on the basis of merely three factors, accent, tonality, and interval, dividing them into

- (1) tunes beginning on a weak or strong beat,
- (2) in a major or minor (or otherwise modal) key,
- (3) with a first progression upward or downward—stepwise, skipping up a third, fourth, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> This factor is a handicap in the use of the *Dictionary of Musical Themes* recently published by Harold Barlow and Sam Morgenstern. This contains the opening phrases of all the major orchestral works arranged alphabetically by composer and title, with a finding list in alphabetical notation: C D E C F E D, but with everything transposed to C major or A minor.

with the size and direction of the second interval needed in a few instances where there were more than ten examples of a kind otherwise. No special musical plates were used as in each case reference was made by number to the tune as given in *The Hymnal* 1940.

More recently we have learned that Fr. Laurence Feininger plans an index to all the polyphonic motets, masses, and hymns of the 15th and 16th centuries, similarly based on the direction and size of the initial intervals.

At least two individuals have experimented with melodic indexes using Arabic numerals in the finding list. Thus, *Old 100th* would read: 1 1 7 6 5 1 2 3. The tonic sol-fa approach was attempted in a very useful index compiled by Caspar Gregory Dickson some years ago on cards which are now preserved in the Music Division of the Library of Congress. Here each tune is reduced to tonic sol-fa notation and then filed alphabetically, *Old 100th* reading Do, do, ti, la, sol, do, re, mi. Both of these devices require considerable familiarity before they can be used with facility. A musician consulting them only occasionally would be under substantial handicap.

Probably the most useful tune index which has been compiled to the present date is that found in the six volumes of Johannes Zahn's *Die Melodien der deutschen evangelischen Kirchenlieder*. Zahn was fortunate in that he was not concerned with a predominance of Long, Short, and Common Metre tunes. Consequently, he was able to organize his tunes first by the number of musical phrases in the tune (which of course was also the number of lines in each stanza of the text) and then by the verse form used in the text: iambic, trochaic, etc. His third and final breakdown was by the number of syllables in the metre: 8.8.7; 8.8.8; 10.8.8; 13.11.7; etc. In each case the entire tune is given as it appears in the original source, with the first stanza of text. Later variants of the tune are given either as notes or successively numbered tunes, with additional uses of the tune and other texts noted. His only finding list is an extensive index of text incipits. A separate chronological list of sources notes the tunes which appeared for the first time in each source.

Here is an ideal toward which any project in the comprehensive indexing of hymn tunes must aim, adding only the tune names which have become basic adjuncts in English speaking countries. Anything short of Zahn's comprehensiveness must be clearly recognized as a deliberate compromise adopted for distinctly stated expediencies. Only a full printing of the tune and its variants will produce a definitive compendium; to have research value, all variants must also be cited together with the various texts used with the tune.

Since any work covering American and British hymnody will have a majority of tunes in fixed metres, it may be found preferable to make the first breakdown by metres rather than simply the number of phrases; certainly metre would come before verse form so that, for example, all of the 8.7:8.7 tunes should come together, iambic first then trochaic, rather than having all iambic verses come together, 7.6:7.6 followed by 8.7:8.7. Many persons likely to use the material will recognize an 8.7:8.7 tune much more readily than they will a trochaic verse.

A tune index of the nature and scope we have been describing, were it to be comprehensive enough to serve as a general reference work (which is, after all, the only reason for a tune index), would have to include approximately 100 English collections of the 16th to the 20th centuries and possibly half that many American collections.<sup>2</sup> Arranged by metres in the order used by most metrical indexes, each tune should be given in full with the first stanza of the original text to which it was set. The facts of its composition and first publication should be briefly stated. Using an alphabetical or numerical code for various collections included in the index, the entry should then list those collections in which the tune appears and the name it is given in each. Finally, there should be four separate indexes or "finding lists" at the back of the work:

- (1) an index of tune names,
- (2) a melodic index based on intervals as in *The Hymnal 1940 Companion*,
- (3) an index of composers,
- (4) an index of text incipits—a first-line index.

Obviously a compendium of the scope which has been described is far beyond the powers of any one individual although the constructive work now being undertaken by certain individuals will contribute to its foundations. This proposal would merely build further along the same lines they have gone in a more limited degree. The larger task can only be successfully undertaken by a committee under the sponsorship of a permanent organization, with a generous grant from some foundation to cover expenses and to guarantee ultimate publication. The Hymn Society of Great Britain has undertaken the task of preparation of a completely revised edition of Julian's famous dictionary of hymn texts. The Hymn Society of America is a logical body to com-

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<sup>2</sup> Such an estimate does not include the gospel hymn collections; they could better be included in a separate work, since there has seldom been any borrowing of tunes for different texts, or even separate naming of tunes in those collections.



plement the English work with a comprehensive dictionary of hymn tunes inclusive of the results of previous investigation. Here is a concrete ideal which, if successfully undertaken, will firmly establish the Society's place among American learned societies and similar cultural organizations.

### A Sample Entry

664.6664

271.

*Italian Hymn*

Felice de Giardini.

Come, thou al-might-y King, Help us thy Name to sing,  
 Help us to praise Fa-ther, whose love un-known All things cre-  
 a-ted own, Build in our hearts thy throne, An-cient of Days.

First published in Martin Madan's *Collection of Psalm and Hymn Tunes*, 1769 (the *Lock Collection*).

Found in A, B, C, D, F, G, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, T, U, V, W, X, Y. Called *Moscow* in E, H, Q, S, Z; *Trinity* in B, C, L, M, O; also known as *Bentinck*, *Fairford*, *Florence*, and *Hermon*.

Entries in Index I: *Bentinck*, *Fairford*, *Florence*, *Italian Hymn*, *Moscow*, *Trinity*.

Index II: I. Tunes beginning on a strong beat

A. in a major key,

1. with first progression downward,

a. skip down a third,

(1) then skip down another third: 271

Index III: Giardini, Felice de 271

Index IV: Come, thou almighty King 271

# Hymn of Hope

*"God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

O God our everlasting strength,  
On Thee our hopes we cast;  
When other strongholds prove but vain,  
Thine arm shall hold us fast.

There is no other anchorage  
The troubled heart can know;  
Thou art alone immutable  
Amid life's ebb and flow.

For all eternity surrounds  
Our measured time and day;  
And hope that's hid in Christ the Lord  
Holds us within its sway.

O God of hope, the Living God,  
For ever blessed be,  
Who dwellest in the sov'reign light  
Of immortality,

Whom none have seen, nor yet can see;  
But hope eternal soars,  
Made bold in Christ to reach at last  
Heaven's everlasting shores.

The writing of this hymn was suggested by an article on "Safe Anchorage" by Lord Macmillan in the *Spectator*, August 26, 1949. This is not the first time that the *Spectator* has been closely connected with Christian hymns. The hymn, "When all Thy mercies, O my God," was written by Addison and published in the *Spectator*, August 9, 1712, at the conclusion of an essay on Gratitude.

The *Hymn of Hope* expresses the symbolism of the anchor cast upon the everlasting strength, an anchorage fixed in eternity. The closing stanzas, strongly influenced by the majestic language of *I Tim.* 6. 15, 16 and *Hebrews* 10. 19, 20, praise the God of hope, with whom the soul, through hope, will at last be united.

In seeking a musical partner for the words, no tune seemed more suitable than the fine Scottish Psalm-tune, *Caithness*, which may be found in the *Episcopal Hymnal*, 1940, no. 416.

At the request of American friends and of your Editor, I have pleasure in forwarding this hymn in the hope that whatever merit it

may possess, it will be blessed of Heaven, and "raise the spirit of devotion, confirm faith, enliven hope, and kindle love to God and man."

FRANK B. MERRYWEATHER

*Editor's Note:*

We are gratified to have the opportunity to publish this beautiful *Hymn of Hope*. It has been evaluated as "refreshing, clear and natural, with certain lines remarkably beautiful, a hymn which, with its ease and balance should lend itself exceptionally well to being set to music." The hymn appeared on the Hymn Sheets prepared for the Annual meeting of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, held in the Chapel of Jesus College, Cambridge, there sung to *Caithness*.

The author is the Hon. Secretary of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and well known in England as a hymn writer. His new hymn on St. John the Evangelist appears in the 1950 edition of *Hymns, Ancient & Modern*. The Reverend Frank B. Merryweather holds the copyright to the *Hymn of Hope*. Permission to reprint should be secured by addressing the author at Oxhill Rectory, Warwickshire, England.

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(Continued from page 12)

With the possible exception of Isaac Watts' "Alas! and did my Saviour bleed," no hymn can arouse keener controversy, primarily because of the poetic imagery of its first stanza, than "There is a fountain filled with blood." Dr. Moffatt, in the *Handbook to the Church Hymnary*, says of it: "The hymn must be taken as Cowper wrote it, or not at all." Mrs. Oliphant, in her edition of Cowper's poems, expressed doubt that it was sung by any congregation. Of all the *Olney Hymns* we have mentioned, this one is probably most alien in its imagery to our generation; it may well be supplanted by other hymns which are more suitable, though not quite as vivid.

What about Cowper's hymns? Will they live? In 1907 the Rev. Joseph Newton Hallock wrote an article for *The Christian Work and Evangelist* to discuss the Centenary celebration of the poet's death. It was Mr. Hallock's opinion that in the commemoration ceremonies the hymns were almost overlooked, if not forgotten. However, one ventures the prediction that we shall find good cause to mark the Bicentenary of Cowper's death, and that as we pay tribute to his contribution to the Church's Song, we shall find some of his hymns still printed in hymnals and still in common use for the celebration.



# What About Hymn Tempos?

W. SCOTT WESTERMAN

FOR truly effective congregational singing there must be a careful consideration of the pace or tempo at which the hymns are sung. Who has not suffered from the surfeit of "linked sweetness long drawn out," as the stanzas of a hymn have wearily expired, one by one? Or who has not been whisked through majestic poetry with a speed which blurred the words and vitiated their meaning? And between these extremes, have we not often sensed a lack of appropriateness in many a hymn tempo?

As a musician and a minister I have been greatly interested in this problem. My main concern stems from the fact that I consider the hymns, anthems—in fact, all music—in the service to be as important as the sermon or other spoken words. Years of worship experience have led me to conclude that much may be lost through carelessness or neglect of the congregational singing.

The Methodist Hymnal, used in my church, does not have tempo indications of any sort. The book was published in 1935; at that time some of our churches instructed their choir directors to conduct congregational singing, a procedure which has fortunately been discarded, as it is recognized to be a deterrent to worship. In most churches the responsibility for the hymn tempo rests with the organist. When questioned about the hymn tempo, most organists frankly admit that it is difficult for them to have a singer's viewpoint.

Increasingly the denominational hymnals are published with helps for tempos. The present Presbyterian Hymnal has many excellent directions. For example, the hymn "Hark, what a sound, and too divine for hearing," set to the tune *Welwyn*, has the direction, "In moderate time, with joyous reverence." Other hymns are marked "Not too fast," "Not too slow," "Rather slow," "With dignity, but not too slowly."

From experience I have found that, helpful as such indications are, it is not enough to indicate "fast." An organist with whom I worked for ten years felt such general directions to be inadequate; "fast" did not always mean the same to her as to me, and she found that in certain circumstances—varying with health, mood, temperature, etc.—the terms had changed significance for her. Because of this situation, we decided to use metronomic markings, and I was to mark the tempo for each hymn on the service outlines I gave her each week. These suggested tempos were reconsidered after use and often revised for future effectiveness.

Over a period of time it was possible to make a general study of the hymns in our hymnal and I marked them with what seemed to be the best *basic* tempo. This project was enlarged to include consultation of hymnals which did provide metronomic indications. Such cross-reference proved to be interesting and enlightening.

It may be of interest to indicate the hymnals which were used in our effort to arrive at some *basic* tempos. I used *Songs Of Praise* which suggests tempos by words, as does the Presbyterian hymnal; *The English Hymnal*, *The Christian Science Hymnal*, and *The Church Hymnal* (Episcopal, 1916) all provided metronomic indications. My procedure was to list the hymns used with each tune given in these books, correlate the hymns and tunes of the Methodist book, and thus provide a basis for selecting a wise tempo. The 1914 edition of the French publication, *Popular Songs With Music*, also provided a source of marked tempos. More recently it was possible to compare the tempos on my charts with those in a copy of *The Boston Haendel and Haydn Society of Church Music*, edited by Lowell Mason, 1836, and I came to have a genuine respect for the lung-power and patience of our forefathers who could "hold on" to notes as long as they must have done if they followed the directions in that book!

Speaking as a minister, I would pay tribute to the organists with whom I have been associated. They have been in full accord with my effort to make the congregational singing meaningful and to assure whole-hearted participation by the lay singers. One fact has emerged from these experiences: finding a basic tempo for a given hymn and tune is not something that can be done arbitrarily.

In order to establish the basic tempo, a silent reading of the hymn will help one to capture the thought as well as the atmosphere or mood of the poem. Most good hymns are so unified as to have a dominant "mood-motif." When such a hymn is wedded to an appropriate tune, the result is indeed fortunate, and leads to an effective expression of the "mood-motif" when the hymn is sung. When the words are sung to the accompaniment, one may quickly discover whether the pace set allows for adequate verbal expression, at the same time doing justice to the tune. It is necessary to sing all the stanzas at the tempo chosen to make sure that the vitality of the hymn is maintained to the end.

It must be stressed repeatedly that no tempo can be considered to be rigid or mechanical, but must be *basic*—always subject to revision. There would need to be some slight modifications of tempo within the hymn, but the return to the dominant tempo should not be deferred. (As interpreters, we are all tempted in this respect!) Distor-

tions of hymn tempos are often obvious when efforts are made to adapt certain tunes to processional use, also when hymns are used inexpertly in hymn-anthems, and sometimes there is unwarranted distortion with the addition of free accompaniment. There are, of course, hymn tunes which can be used instrumentally at various tempos, but where the association of words and tune is well established, any wide variations are likely to be an impediment to the worshiper.

An example of necessary variations of tempo for the tune which is used for more than one set of words is the following, taken from the *Church Hymnal*, 1920. The tune *Regent Square* is used for "Angels from the Realms of Glory" and the metronomic indication is  $\text{♩} = 100$ ; the same tune appears with "Holy Father, Great Creator"  $\text{♩} = 90$ ; again, with "Christ is made the Sure Foundation"  $\text{♩} = 96$ ; "Light's Abode, Celestial Salem" calls for  $\text{♩} = 92$ . In each case there is a slight adaptation of the tempo because of the nature of the words.

Recently, the Ohio Chapter of the Hymn Society engaged in a discussion of hymn tempos and tested out a number of hymns by singing them at certain set speeds. During the discussion period members expressed preference as to speeds; the Lutheran members, with a background of chorale singing, preferred slower tempos for the chorales, but in general, it was found that the group was in accord with the basic tempos chosen. The first singing was done in a small room; later the group adjourned to the church auditorium where the tempos were tested in the larger space and found but slight need for variation.

There naturally will be special problems where one leads the singing for large assemblies. Careful study over a period of years seems to indicate that the size of the group and the space need not retard the tempo appreciably. There may be a basic tempo to which one adheres in the "onward march of the hymn," subject, of course, to marked acoustical problems.

Perhaps our sense of speed is conditioned by the age in which we live. Or, it may be that increasingly, the tempo of the hymn is governed by the whim of the organist. In Lowell Mason's time *Amsterdam*, usually sung with "Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings," was to be taken at  $\text{♩} = 56$ ; the same tune is indicated as  $\text{♩} = 80$  in modern hymnals. Even this is too slow today, and the tune is more often sung close to  $\text{♩} = 92$ . It is well for us to heed the words of Vaughan Williams in the Preface to *The English Hymnal* where he says, "The present custom in English churches is to sing hymns much too fast."

I would suggest nine steps in determining a basic hymn tempo.

1. Read carefully the entire hymn to discover its meaning and its pattern.
2. Work out a "mood-motif" if possible.
3. Note any crowding



together of words of awkward syllables which will be difficult to sing. 4. When satisfied that you have found the norm of word pace for effective *verbal* expression, then play the tune at a matching tempo. 5. If you find the music content suffers by this attempted matching, it is an inadequate musical setting, and accommodations will necessarily have to be made. 6. When there is conflict between verbal and musical expression, seek to compromise and adjust toward a common denominator, sacrificing as little of word meaning *and* music meaning as possible. 7. In cases of considerable conflict, let the *words* prevail. 8. Let all modifications be slight, returning faithfully to the dominant tempo. 9. Test the tempo by singing the entire hymn; note whether the hymn remains *vital* to the end.

Because the whole matter of hymn tempos is a controversial one, I would like to offer the following suggestions, based on my own experience, in the hope that others may be led to experiment with the problem. 1. "Holy, holy, holy" (*Nicaea*) Mood-motif: Adoration and Praise; Basic tempo  $\text{♩} = 108$ . 2. "Come, Thou Almighty King" (*Italian Hymn*) Mood-motif: Grandeur of Petition; Basic tempo  $\text{♩} = 96$ . 3. "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne" (*Old 100th*) Mood-motif: Majestic joy; Basic tempo:  $\text{♩} = 88$ . 4. "O Worship the King" (*Lyons*) Mood-motif: Grateful praise; Basic tempo  $\text{♩} = 92$ . 5. "The God of Abraham Praise" (*Leoni*) Mood-motif: Solemn praise of God's Infinitude; Basic tempo  $\text{♩} = 80$ . 6. "Ye watchers and ye holy ones" (*Lasst Uns Erfreuen*) Mood-motif: Most joyous praise; Basic tempo  $\text{♩} = 72$  *alla breve*. 7. "Now Thank we all our God" (*Nun danket*) Mood-motif: Thanksgiving and Praise; Basic tempo  $\text{♩} = 76$ . 8. "New every morning is the love" (*Melcombe*) Reassurance  $\text{♩} = 88$ . 9. "All praise to Thee, my God, this night" (*Tallis' Canon*) Mood-motif: Security in God; Basic tempo  $\text{♩} = 72$ . 10. "My God, I thank Thee" (*Fowler*) Mood-motif: Tender appreciation; Basic tempo  $\text{♩} = 44$ .

No doubt there will always be present the personal equation in interpretation of hymns, a factor which threatens always to affect the tempo. A small pocket metronome, carried to many a service, has shown a surprisingly wide variation in tempos for hymns by various organists. This is not a bad thing; we should allow a reasonable latitude in interpretation, but there is a need for more attention to a careful measurement which only metronomic measurement of hymns can fill. Certainly, in our scientific age, we may profit from a more scientific effort to solve the ever-present tempo problem of our hymns if we would make the effort to gauge them less generally and more definitely. The restoration of metronomic markings in our hymnals would give a basis for comparison and for future improvement.

# Hymns in Periodical Literature

Compiled by RUTH ELLIS MESSENGER

ALLAN BACON, "What is Good Church Music?," *Religion in Life*, Spring, 1950.

This deserves careful reading by church musicians. Prof. Bacon speaks from a wide academic and practical experience, with common sense, on one of the most controversial subjects of the religious world. He is not a musical purist nor does he regard the technical skill of the musical composer a sufficient criterion. "Church music, then, to be an adjunct of worship, should be of a type the people (the worshipers, that is, not just the organist or director) understand, so that it can be a valid reflex or expression of their souls' deepest yearning." Throughout the article one is impressed by the continuing thread of sincerity and spirituality. Every aspiring organist or choir master ought to read his version of the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican—and the old-timers might profit from its truth as well.

W. BARNETT BLAKEMORE, "The God we Sing," *Christian Century*, Dec. 14, 1949.

"For the vast majority of Christians, hymns have done more than anything else to define their ideas of God, the central element in religious thought." This thesis is supported by a beautiful and provocative presentation of our "hymn-built ideas of God." The familiar affirmations of hymnody have been freely combined and interwoven into a poetic expression of the Christian's belief that God is actuality, purposeful, compassionate, effective, attractive, intends to produce a blessed community and deals with us personally. The total reflection of God in our hymns may be summed up in the words: "God is love. Let us praise him."

RALPH H. GABRIEL, "Evangelical Religion and Popular Romanticism in Early Nineteenth Century America," *Church History*, March, 1950.

In this article, Dr. Gabriel, whose prestige as an authority on the history of American culture is unquestioned, has set forth the interrelations of the evangelical and romantic movements in the period indicated. Only recently have the cultural backgrounds of hymnic expression begun to receive attention, long due to motivations which have hitherto been little understood. The student of American hymn-

nology will find the whole article rewarding but will, perhaps, be most interested in the "white spirituals" of the frontier camp meetings which appeared as a part of the folk culture of backwoods communities. During the same period the hymns in the east were of inferior quality. In this "musical wilderness" Lowell Mason appeared, and soon became the greatest American composer of hymn tunes of his day. Dr. Gabriel's tribute to Mason and his influence will be appreciated as much as the frank appraisal of the religious environment in which Mason's tunes were created.

RUTH E. MESSENGER, "The Classical Influence in the Hymns of St. Ambrose," *Folia*, 4(1949) nos. 1-3.

A brief treatment of classical reflections in eighteen Ambrosian hymns, written to illustrate the theme to which *Folia* is devoted, namely, the Christian perpetuation of the classics.

——, "The Eighth Day," *Classical Outlook*, May, 1950.

An account of the symbolism of the *dies octavus* as it appears in Latin hymns. At times it refers to the day of judgment; at times to a period of blessedness initiated by the Resurrection of Jesus, an aspect of the Easter message of joy and hope.

——, "Sancta Maria quid est?" *Catholic Choirmaster*, June, 1950.

A study of processional hymn for the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, from a tenth century Roman Pontifical.

BERNARD M. PEEBLES, "O Roma Nobilis," *American Benedictine Review*, 1 (1950), no. 1.

Named as the official hymn of the present Holy Year, *O Roma Nobilis*, of tenth century origin, is regarded as a product of Monte Cassino. Mr. Peebles' article is based on an exhaustive study of the manuscript sources, including the traditional music; and on a survey of the existing literature concerning the hymn. He finds that the hymn, always a favorite among lovers of medieval Latin poetry, won general popularity in the late nineteenth century for its expressions of devotion to the Eternal City and its great representatives, St. Peter and St. Paul. The tradition that it was used as a pilgrim's hymn, although unsubstantiated for the past, has become a present-day reality.

With the kind permission of the editor we are printing the first stanza of this hymn, with the author's prose paraphrase.



O Roma nobilis, orbis et domina,  
 Cunctarum urbium excellentissima,  
 Roseo martyrum sanguine rubea,  
 Albis et virginum liliis candida:  
 Salutem dicimus tibi per omnia,  
 Te benedicimus: salve per secula.

O noble Rome, queen of the world,  
 Fairest of all cities,  
 Rose-hued with the blood of Martyrs,  
 White-shining with the lilies of Virgins:  
 We salute and we bless thee  
 Through all ages.

*Note:* A short article, "The Holy Year Hymn" (by the same author), appears in *The Catholic Choirmaster*, Sept., 1950.

ERIK R. ROUTLEY, "The Present State of Hymnology," *English Church Music*, April, 1950.

Mr. Routley, always a forceful and trenchant writer, meets the challenge of the critics of hymns used in churches, by acknowledging the rights of the critics and the usefulness of their criticisms. Hymnology, a practical and academic study both musical and literary, is fitted to correct the faults of present usage and to show the way to future reforms. The author traces the progress of hymnology as a modern systematic study which reached its first great achievements in the publication of Julian's *Dictionary* in 1891 and the Historical Edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* in 1909; then progressing to the modern hymnal handbooks and text books. Hymnology has gained and now possesses a new dignity as the "study of the theory and practice of Christian hymnody" with its object, "the edifying and beautifying of the Lord's house."

ERIK R. ROUTLEY, Editor, "The Gillman Papers," *Bulletin of the Hymn Society of Gt. Britain and Ireland*, Oct. 1949; Jan., 1950.

All who knew Mr. Gillman as a personal friend or through his writings are grateful to Mr. Routley for reprinting these treasures from his miscellaneous papers. In "The Ethics of Hymn-singing," (1910), Mr. Gillman stresses the "recovery of sincerity." "No hymn-singing is worth engaging in unless it comes from the heart." "On Mending Hymns," (1912), is a discussion of the editor's right to alter the author's original text. "For Better Christian Hymns," (1937), is a plea for the highest possible standard of content in the hymnal and

for its intelligent and reverent use. "The Making of the Fellowship Hymn Book," (1929), describes the process involved in compiling the hymnal associated with Mr. Gillman's name. "The Cook and the Policeman's Number," (1920), is a charming group of humorous anecdotes about hymns, especially as misunderstood by children and adults.

In every phase of his great knowledge and appreciation of hymns, Mr. Gillman displayed that delightful personality which we hold in affectionate remembrance. We can hear him saying, as he does in one of these papers, "The true purpose of Christian hymnody is to help us to live nearer to God."

## Canon Briggs Visits America

George Wallace Briggs, D. D., Canon of Worcester Cathedral, England, and until recently co-chairman of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, was the principal speaker at the 1950 Annual Meeting of The Hymn Society of America, on May 13, at the General Theological Seminary, New York City. The subject of his noteworthy address was "British Hymnody Today."

In his remarks before the Society, Canon Briggs gave an informal brief sketch of the trends in English hymnody during the past fifty years. He stressed the increasing movement toward ecumenicity in the compilation of hymnals, and emphasized the value in drawing from the great treasures of various traditions and denominations. Canon Briggs particularly urged contemporary hymn writers to concentrate upon the production of worthy hymns for special occasions, such as weddings, and hymns built on the Gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry. He urged composers to write in a variety of meters. There are many hymns of commanding merit which need new set-

tings, particularly those in seldom-used meters. In response to questions from the floor, the speaker elaborated on the present trend, as he sees it, toward a more objective re-evaluation of the nineteenth century hymns and tunes. He also mentioned the apparent lessening of excessive emphasis on "folk-tunes," an increase of tunes from the early psalters; and increasing numbers of tunes from contemporary composers.

Canon and Mrs. Briggs were in America from March 23 until June 10, during which time the Canon lectured in Berkeley Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut. They were guests of The Hymn Society on the occasion of the Scottish Psalter Tercentenary Festival at Riverside Church, where Canon Briggs spoke briefly and read Dr. Millar Patrick's Prayer for the Tercentenary Commemoration. On Sunday, May 21, he preached in the Fort George Presbyterian Church; Rev. Deane Edwards and Dr. William W. Rockwell, representing the Society, participated in the Service. Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, Dr. William Pierson Merrill, Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, and Dr. John Haynes Holmes sent messages of greeting and expressed regrets at being unable to participate in



—M. Nakamura Photo

The participants in the service honoring Canon Briggs at Fort George Presbyterian Church, New York City, May 21, 1950, L. to R., are: Mr. George Litch Knight, Dr. William Walker Rockwell, Canon Briggs, Rev. L. Richard Mellin of Fort George Church, and Rev. Deane Edwards.

the Service. A unique event in The Service was the reading, by Mr. Edwards, of a Prayer of Thanksgiving which Canon Briggs had written for a Festival celebrating the Watts Bicentenary, held in the Fort George Church in November, 1948.

Canon Briggs is widely known in America as a writer of hymns, an increasing number of which are finding their way into contemporary hymnals. The recent Episcopal Hymnal and the Unitarian *Hymns of the Spirit* contain some of his best hymns, and the latter has one of his own tunes. During his stay in America, Canon Briggs was in consultation with the Oxford University Press, publishers of his books in England. He is known widely in England for his collection of historic prayers and for his Service Book for Schools; the latter was prepared in collaboration with his friend and associate, Ralph Vaughan Williams.

All who were privileged to meet Canon and Mrs. Briggs were impressed with their gracious manner and their sincere interest in things American. Both expressed themselves on a number of occasions as deeply impressed with their experiences at the seminary and in the various meetings and services which they attended during their visit.

With his permission, we share a letter which Canon Briggs addressed to the Editor, designed for the members of the Society:

"I should like, if I may, before we leave for England, to express through you the gratitude of my wife and myself for all the kindness which the Hymn Society has showed us. The warmhearted generosity of Americans generally has been a revelation to us; and the Hymn Society has been no exception.

I was indeed grateful for the privi-



lege of being present at the Annual Meeting. The business meeting which preceded it was an education to me, and I shall be able to report it at our own Annual Meeting at Cambridge in July.

One note which was sounded was very familiar, that the Society ought to have a larger membership. This is as true with us as it is with you. With that aim I entirely agree. The study of hymns is a valuable part of religious education. Moreover, there is nothing which helps more towards Christian unity, for there are no denominational frontiers in hymnology. I believe that a larger membership is by no means impossible. During the last two months I have been lecturing, chiefly in Hymnody, to theological students; there is no doubt of their real interest in the subject.

At the same time, I do not feel that a Hymn Society is lost without a large membership. It is a case in which quality counts for much more than quantity. Hymn-books, in both our countries, are compiled by a comparatively small number of people; at least some of them should belong to a fellowship like the Hymn Society. Anybody who has had the task of compiling a hymn-book knows that it is not a simple matter of choosing a certain number of hymns of a recognised standard. A hymn-book has to be a severely practical book. There must be hymns to suit certain seasons and certain occasions; and editors have to take the best that they can find. Sometimes it is inferior, and they know it, but there seems to be nothing better, or at least they know nothing better. That is where the Hymn Society can prove itself most helpful. I do not mean, of course, that it will take the place of the various denominational committees which are, from time to time, set up. Those com-

mittees will continue to cherish their independence. But the association of some of their members, within the Hymn Society, with people of other traditions and other experience has a most salutary effect on our hymn-books. That can come about even with a limited membership, if it is the right kind of a membership.

Ever yours sincerely,  
G. W. BRIGGS

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## Obituary

Dr. Hugh Thomson Kerr, one of America's best known Presbyterian ministers, died June 20, 1950. The religious press contained tributes to his greatness as pastor, preacher, teacher, prophet, author, and thinker; members of the Hymn Society of America gratefully remember him as the writer of four hymns.

Dr. Kerr was not a prolific hymn writer. His best known hymn, "God of Our Life," was written for the 50th Anniversary of the Shadyside Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh. In 1931 he wrote "On Wings of Living Light" upon the occasion of the unveiling of a radio tablet in the Shadyside Church. "O Thou Joy, All Joy Excelling" was dedicated to Dr. and Mrs. C. Herbert Rice, and "Come, Thou my Light" was published in 1942 by The Hymn Society, though an earlier form of the hymn is dated April 28, 1936.

When the present Presbyterian hymnal was projected Dr. Kerr's name was in the forefront of those suggested for its preparation. He served as the chairman of the Committee on Content, drawn from the Advisory Committee. He further served his denomination, doing outstanding work on the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship* in its most recent revision.

## Reviews

*The Gospel in Hymns*, by Albert E. Bailey, pp. 600. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1950. \$6.00.

1950 has been a great year in hymn circles. It has seen the publication of Miller Patrick's great *Four Centuries of Scottish Psalmody* in connection with the Tercentenary of the Scottish Psalter. But of even greater interest to Americans has been the publication of Dr. Bailey's monumental contribution to hymnology. *The Gospel in Hymns* is an outstanding piece of work; let there be no doubt about that fact. It is safe to say that Dr. Bailey has, out of sixty years of hymn singing and study, given us a definitive study of hymns as related to the political, economic, and literary movements of the periods from which they have come.

Dr. Bailey's material has been gathered together into cogent chapters covering stated periods. Each chapter is headed by an outline of the history of the period under discussion; this is invaluable, for the "thumb-nail" sketches help to remind the reader of easily forgotten facts. We note with pleasure that our Associate Editor, Dr. William Walker Rockwell, was a consultant on the historical materials in the book.

Dr. Bailey's scholarship is of a high order. He skirted the maze of metrical psalters with aplomb, and one is delighted to see that, though he did not have the opportunity to read Dr. Patrick's materials, he arrives at some of the same conclusions independently—conclusions which showed a careful study of extant materials and a cautious weighing thereof. The material on the Wesley family is well organized, though one feels that Dr. Bailey's imaginative reconstructions are not quite as successful as his annotations to individual hymns.

Dr. Bailey wisely limits the hymns he discusses, and his method of selection is unique. He took the current hymnals of the eight largest Christian denominations, in addition to one independent hymnal and a popular Anglican book, and selected from these ten books the hymns found in at least six of the collections. The result is that he deals with a total of 313 hymns. Thus, perhaps for the first time, we actually know what hymns are in common use. The *Inter-Church Hymnal* of the 1930's was an effort in that direction, though not as scientifically handled as Dr. Bailey's method.

The Western Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Guild of Organists presented a Hymn Festival on April 30, 1950, based on Dr. Bailey's book. That service deserves repetition throughout the country, and is a model of what can be done imaginatively to make the hymnal vital *and* of interest to the man in the pews.

If we were asked to recommend a single book for the person interested in hymnology, clergy or layman, we should unhesitatingly send them to *The Gospel in Hymns*. It will never replace the valuable handbooks to individual denominational hymnals, and was not intended to do so, but within its covers one may find the graphic history of the hymns that are sung in churches today. The book deserves a wide sale and ought to be on the shelves of every minister and organist in the United States of America. The publishers deserve credit for having rendered a genuine public service in making available this book at such a relatively low cost. The illustrations—and they abound in quantity and variety—are excellent. The format, lay-out, and binding all contribute to the general overall excellence of *The Gospel in Hymns*.

GEORGE LITCH KNIGHT



## Notes from the Executive Secretary

A FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIP—St. John's Church, Yonkers, N. Y., worshiped through hymns on April 23rd at its morning service, which was titled "Service for acquainting the congregation with its new *Hymnal 1940*." In place of the three canticles hymns were used; instead of the sermon the organist, Mr. Clifford E. Dinsmore, directed the congregation from the chancel steps in the singing of six well-chosen hymns, giving appropriate comments about each one. Mr. Dinsmore used one modal tune, two Bohemian melodies, a lovely small setting by Parratt for "I need Thee every hour" (438), Burleigh's flowing Negro melody *McKee* and the well-known tune *Erie* by Converse. Only one tune and three hymn texts were at all familiar. The choir members were placed in small groups throughout the congregation, and the "sermon hymns" were played by the rector, the Reverend L. J. Winterbottom! Altogether the congregation shared in singing thirteen hymns during the Service. We also notice that in this church the choir of the Church School rehearses at 8:30 a.m. in preparation for its service at 9:30.

Such a service could be held in any church that is deeply concerned about its congregational singing. For Episcopal churches that may be interested in the program of the service described above, a copy of the order of worship is available on request.

Annual reports of choir and organ work are becoming more common each year. We mentioned several in the Summer News Letter: another must be added, that of the House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minn. For the past season a distinctive feature has been the use of a short anthem or hymn in a service of choir preparation held just before the Sunday morning

service. Eugene L. Nordgren, M.Mus. is organist, succeeding the late Buchanan Morton. Dr. Irving Adams West is minister.

The literature mentioned on the enclosed sheet includes a few books as well as the materials which are in stock. Last year several members selected Christmas presents from it; now is the time to make such a choice. The Scottish Psalter (1929) is again available, and we are sending to Scotland for copies of Dr. Millar Patrick's *Story of the Church's Song*, which deserves a place on every hymnic shelf. May we also remind our readers that a new printing of the Scottish Psalter hymn leaflet will be made this Fall; the quantity will depend upon the orders sent in by those who plan to commemorate the Anniversary at Reformation Sunday season.

REGINALD L. McALL

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS—Dr. Leonard Ellinwood is a Contributing Editor of THE HYMN. He was the Editor of *The Hymnal 1940 Companion*. His rich experience in the Music Division of the Library of Congress, coupled with years of research in hymnody, well qualifies him to speak on hymn tune indexing. Dr. Ellinwood presented the substance of his article as a Paper read before the Washington Chapter of the American Musicological Society. . . . Reverend W. Scott Westermann is the minister of the First Methodist Church, Columbus, Ohio, and a leader in the Ohio Chapter of The Hymn Society of America. Mr. Westermann presented the material contained in his article at the Hymn Society meeting, held in conjunction with the annual convention of the Music Teachers' National Association, February 27, 1950, in Cleveland, Ohio.